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ABSTRACT

While the perception of rape has been studied intensely in recent years, most scales focus on rape myths as the content domain. The need exists for a more general instrument which would include items from a variety of sources, e.g., attitudes toward rape awareness, sexual history, age, virginity, community support, etc., in addition to the myth of victim responsibility. A four-phase process was used to develop a general scale of attitudes toward rape (GATR). In phase 1, 36 male and 36 female undergraduates completed an instrument with an item pool of 80 statements. The item analysis yielded 22 statements with high part-whole correlations. Results from male (N=36) and female (N=35) undergraduates participating in phase 2 of the study showed that the revised GATR scale effectively distinguished between men and women; findings suggest that males are more acceptant of rape than are females. In phase 3, 47 male and 65 female undergraduates completed the GATR, the Attitudes Toward Rape Scale (Field) and the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Burt). Results support the concurrent validity of the GATR scale. Construct and factor validity of the GATR were evaluated in phase 4. The GATR and several personality measures were administered to 196 male and 160 female undergraduates. The scale showed promising concurrent, construct, and known group validity. To some extent, attitudes toward rape were associated with personality traits of locus of control, Machiavellianism, and anomie. The unidimensional character of the GATR scale was also demonstrated. (NB)

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Attitudes toward Rape

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Abstract

The development of a Likert-type scale measuring general attitudes toward rape (GATR) is reported in four phases. Phase 1 (item selection) yielded 22 items with part-whole correlations > .54. Phase 2 examined reliability and sex differences. Results showed a corrected reliability coefficient of .81 and males more acceptant of rape than females ($t = 8.34$, $p < .01$). Phase 3 evaluated the concurrent validity of the GATR scale yielding moderate correlations to two established measures. Phase 4 demonstrated a relationship between the GATR scale and locus of control, machiavellianism, and anomie. Again sex differences were found reliable. An orthogonal factor analysis and alpha coefficient (.92, $p < .001$) effectively showed the unidimensional structure of the GATR scale.

The perception of rape has been studied intensely in the last decade. Attitudes and perceptions are thought important to the treatment of both victim and offender (Bohmer, 1974; Bohmer & Blumberg, 1975; Galton, 1976; Holmstrom & Burgess, 1975; and LeBourdais, 1976). There are those who think that rape is best deterred by changing attitudes and perceptions of rape by victims and offenders (e.g., Feild, 1978).

Feild (1978) and Burt (1980) have both measured "adherence to rape myths" (Burt, 1980,217). It is suggested that adherence to rape myths (e.g., only bad girls get raped) distorts the actual pain and injury to the victim and results in blaming victims for their own victimization (Lerner, Miller, & Holmes, 1976). Burt (1980) found evidence for a relationship between acceptance of rape myths and sex role stereotyping, sexual conservatism, and adversarial sexual beliefs.

The culture of our society promotes rape myths (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975) although attitudes seem to vary with age, marital status, sex, education (Feild, 1978), and occupational status (Klemmack & Klemmack, 1976). There is much evidence that we live in a society which condones the sexual abuse of women in movies, advertising, and magazines. Burt (1980) concluded that rape is a logical result of a dominant-submissive, competitive, and sex-role stereotyped society.

The problems of rape constitute a social issue of complex dimensions. Reported cases continue to increase in numbers, and unreported rapes are estimated as many times the reported total. A major reason for the dimension of the problem is rooted in attitudes toward the victim by the rapist and society as a whole. Malamuth, Haber, and Feshbach (1980) investigated the normality of raping behavior (i.e., the assertion that rape is an extension

of normal sexual patterns). These results showed that subjects believe a high percentage of men would rape if able to avoid punishment and that many women would enjoy being victimized. Although both sexes share these beliefs, very few females believe in any personal satisfaction or pleasure from victimization. Malamuth et al. demonstrated a pattern of general attitudes toward rape that show similarity to the callous attitudes held by many convicted rapists. In short, general acceptance of rape myths may facilitate and perpetuate rape behavior (Malamuth & Check, 1980).

Victim responsibility is a major rape myth and facilitates rape acceptance. Kanekar and Kolsawalla (1980) found that both males and females assign responsibility to the victim for her rape (although females to a lesser extent). The victims perceived attractiveness, provocativeness, and respectability were determining factors in assigning rape responsibilities to the victim (Seligman, Brockman, & Koylata, 1977; Thorton, Robbins, & Johnson, 1981).

Despite the importance of attitudes toward rape on treatment of victim and offender, scaling efforts have been limited. The two standardized measures (Feild, 1978; Burt, 1980) were developed some years ago, and changes can be expected in the content of statements from the continual evolution of sex roles changes. Also, the aforementioned scales yielded minimum information on the editing process, indicated some methodological problems in item selection, and focused on rape myths for content. In neither the Feild or Burt reports is there evidence of the editing of statements according to well-established a priori criteria (Edwards, 1957). Feild produced item selection from statements "frequently cited in the literature ... and brief, unambiguous, and nonredundant as possible" (p. 158). Considering the list of

14 informal criteria (Edwards, 1957), Feild's editing procedure appears limited.

Burt (1980) provides no information on a priori editing or on the size of the initial item pool, saying only, "Pretests using large item pools were conducted to select promising items for each scale" (p. 221). For Feild's scale the outcome was a final item pool of 37 statements which must be considered small for standard Likert scales. Feild provided no evidence of use of criteria of item analysis, simply stating, "Analyses of the item response distributions and item content as well as interviews with selected respondents were then conducted" (p. 159). This process produced a final form consisting of 32 items. Feild apparently did not use standard item analysis or criterion of internal consistency and the final form was virtually unchanged from the item pool. On the other hand, Burt did a standard item analysis, but included items of very low part-whole correlations.

Finally, both scales focused on rape myths as the content domain. While rape myths are important aspects of attitudes toward rape, there clearly exists a need for a more general instrument. Such an instrument would include items from a variety of sources, e.g., attitudes toward rape awareness, sexual history, age, virginity, community support, etc., in addition to the myth of victim responsibility.

In conclusion, while the Feild and Burt scales have demonstrated some construct and predictive validity, the content may be somewhat dated. The limited information on editing makes it difficult to evaluate the item pool and the reports suggest a somewhat narrow attitude domain.

The current effort sought to develop a more general scale of attitudes toward rape (GATR) reporting on editing and item analysis. The scaling

effort was produced in four phases. In the first phase, item analysis was reported. In the second phase, reliability and known group validity were evaluated. In the third phase, the GATR scale was correlated into the Feild and Burt measures to obtain some estimate of concurrent validity. The fourth phase re-examined item analysis in a large sample, and evaluted the relationship of the GATR to several personality dimensions. The final phase also re-examined sex differences and a varimax rotated factor analysis of the GATR scale.

Phase 1: Item Analysis Study

Method

Thirty-six male and 36 female undergraduates at Oregon State University participated in the study. The mean age was 23. The sample was approached in the student cafeteria and, therefore, approximated a cross-section of students attending the university. Refusal rate was less than 5%.

The item pool consisted of 80 statements developed through a review of the literature and interviews with people knowledgeable in the field. The statements were edited using Edwards (1957) a priori criteria for scale statements. The statements were keyed 50% in the positive direction and 50% in the negative direction. The survey employed standard Likert instructions, five-step response categories, and randomized the sequence of positive and negative statements.

Results

The item analysis yielded 22 statements with corrected part-whole correlations ranging from .54-.91 ($p \leq .001$). Ten of the statements were keyed in the positive direction and 12 were negative (see Table 1).

Table 1 about here

Phase 2: Reliability and Validity Study

Method

A sample of 36 male undergraduate Oregon State University students and 35 female undergraduates in a Psychology of Women class participated. Respondents' mean age was 21. All students in the class were asked to take part and all completed usable survey forms. Several studies have shown sex differences on several rape-related dimensions. Thus, males view the victim as playing a greater causal role (Selby, Calhoun, & Brock, 1977); males support many of the rape myths (Bernett & Feild, 1977); display different recall of a rape scene (Yarmey & Jones, 1983); and are more acceptant on attitudes toward rape myths (Feild, 1978). Based on these results, males and females were considered known groups with males expected to be more acceptant of rape behavior.

Results

The split-half reliability study yielded a coefficient .68. When corrected by the Spearman-Brown prophesy formula, the coefficient equals .81. The scale shows satisfactory internal reliability.

The known group comparison showed that females had a mean of 93.31 (SD = 7.93) and males a mean of 82.13 (SD = 8.90). The results yielded a t = 8.34 ($p \leq .01$). Consequently, males are more acceptant of rape, as predicted.

Phase 3: Concurrent Validity

The scales developed by Feild (1978) and Burt (1980) serve as criteria for concurrent validity. Consequently, in Phase 3, the Feild and Burt

measures were compared to the GATR scale. Some overlap in constructs were assumed reflected in moderately high correlations.

Method

Forty-seven male and 65 female undergraduates in psychology at Oregon State University responded to the survey. The mean age of the respondents was 21.

The survey consisted of the 22-item GATR scale, the 32-item Attitudes Toward Rape scale (Feild, 1978); and the 11-item Rape Myth Acceptance scale (Burt, 1980). All scales were of the Likert-type with the usual response categories.

Results

The Pearson product-moment correlation between the GATR and the Feild measure was .56 ($p \leq .001$), and the Burt measure was .63 ($p \leq .001$). As expected the correlations were moderately correlated and significant. However, the size of correlations also suggests that the GATR scale measures a dimension independent of the aforementioned measures. In fact, the two other measures are more closely correlated ($r = .77$, $p \leq .001$) than either one to the GATR. On the whole, these results lend support to the concurrent validity of the GATR scale.

Phase 4: Construct, Factor Validity and Replication

In this phase the GATR scale's construct and factor validity were evaluated. Rotter (1966) developed the locus of control concept. Those respondents internally oriented believe that outcomes follow or are contingent on their own action or behavior. External respondents, on the other hand, believe that luck, chance, fate or powerful forces determine the outcome of life. It was predicted that external subjects would score more

positive on attitudes toward rape since this orientation essentially avoids guilt and blame by attributing behaviors to external powerful forces.

Machiavellianism (Christie, 1973) is a concept which measures the propensity to manipulate others to obtain desired ends. It was expected that this cynical outlook would correlate positively with attitudes toward rape since respondents scoring high would be indifferent to the victim. Anomie is defined as normlessness (McClosky & Schaar, 1963) which occurs when the socialization of norms are impeded. Since the absence of norms may facilitate anti-social behavior a positive correlation was expected with the GATR scale.

Method

One hundred ninety-six male and 160 female undergraduates in a sex education course at Oregon State University participated in the study during Spring 1986. The mean age of the respondents was 19. This is a general education class for students from all fields, where all students present were asked to take part and all completed usable survey forms.

A survey composed of the GATR scale and several personality measures were administered to the subjects. The personality variables included locus of control (Rotter, 1966), a 58-item scale with half of the items keyed in the external direction and the rest describing an internal locus of control. Machiavellianism was measured by the 20-item Mach IV scale (Christie, 1973) containing 10 items keyed in each direction. Anomie was measured by the 9-item anomie scale (McClosky & Schaar, 1963) with all items keyed in the direction of normlessness.

Results

The predicted relationships were found between the GATR scale and the several construct measures. The correlation for locus of control was .31

($p \leq .001$); for Machiavellianism, .14 ($p \leq .01$); and for anomie, .13 ($p \leq .01$). Thus, the correlations were all significant, accounting from moderate to small amounts of the variance. Evidently external subjects, to some extent, can avoid blame or guilt by viewing their behavior as fixed or controlled by powerful external forces. To a lesser extent the propensity to manipulate others (Machiavellianism) and normlessness (anomie) also play a role, however marginal, in attitudes toward rape.

As in Phase 2, sex differences were examined. Results yielded a mean of 81.34 (SD = 11.71) for males and 90.78 (SD = 12.80), F (df) = 51.63, $p \leq .001$. As in the previous phase, males were relatively more favorable to rape.

An orthogonal factor analysis with varimax rotation was completed on the GATR scale to examine its structural characteristics. The results yielded three factors accounting for 82.6%, 11.5% and 5.9%, respectively.

Table 2 about here

An examination of the loadings show three interpretable factors. Factor 1 combines items of women wanting rape, meaning to say yes, leading men on, misinterpreting sexual cues, and enjoying rape when forced. This factor is best labeled rape enjoyment. Factor 2 is composed of the largest number of items reflecting a general attitude with a focus on how to handle rape. This factor is called general attitude toward rape. The third factor's eigenvalue is too low to allow for meaningful interpretation.

The calculation of coefficient alpha = .92 ($p \leq .001$), however, lends support to the unidimensional nature of the GATR scale. In addition, an item

analysis was performed in order to compare results with Phase 1. The results are shown in Table 1 above. As can be seen, with a few exceptions, these results duplicate the results of Phase 1.

Summary

This article reports on the development of a general attitude toward rape scale (GATR). The item pool was developed from a review of the literature and interviews with rape counselors and other field workers. These statements were then edited using the multiple a priori criteria developed by Edwards. Results yielded a 22-item scale with high part-whole correlations and internal reliability in both relatively small and large samples.

The GATR scale effectively discriminates between men and women. The scale also shows promising concurrent, construct, and known group validity. To some extent, attitudes toward rape are associated with personality traits such as locus of control, Machiavellianism, and anomie. Alpha coefficient and orthogonal analysis indicate the unidimensional character of the GATR scale.

Table 1. Part-whole correlations for 22-scale statements

Correlation coefficient			Statement
Phase 1	Phase 3		
.54	.62	*1.	Some women at least secretly want to be raped.
.72	.55	2.	Women who say no to sexual advances often mean yes.
.61	.68	*3.	Most rapes happen because women lead men on.
.52	.65	*4.	If a woman really didn't want to be raped she could fight off the attacker.
.55	.72	5.	Increased awareness on rape is a good thing.
.58	.46	6.	Women don't want men to convince them to have sex.
.94	.44	7.	A rapist's sexual history should come out at the trial.
.53	.57	8.	Being sexually assaulted would change my life.
.66	.31	9.	Young girls (under 12) cannot act seductively.
.91	.33	10.	Normal men can rape.
.52	.66	*11.	A spouse owes the other partner sex no matter what the circumstance.
.57	.37	*12.	Raping a virgin is worse than raping a non-virgin.
.57	.58	*13.	Rape is generally a misinterpretation of sexual cues.

.73	.59	*14.	After a man forces himself on a woman, she may start enjoying it.
.51	.67	*15.	It would do some women good to be raped.
.65	.62	16.	Each community should be responsible for providing supportive services to the rape victim.
.52	.46	*17.	A woman can enjoy sex even when it is forced upon her.
.54	.60	18.	I think it would be possible for a wife to be raped by her husband.
.66	.51	*19.	Prostitutes should only report a rape when they have been beaten.
.67	.62	*20.	Only women who are physically beaten should feel justified in reporting rape.
.69	.62	21.	I would be willing to comfort a friend who has been raped.
.73	.52	22.	Rape is not just another feminist issue.

*Weights must be reversed for these items.

Table 2. Orthogonal factor analysis with varimax rotation.

	Factors		
Items	1	2	3
1	.67		
2	.70		
3	.56		
4		.44	
5		.66	
6		.39	
7		.61	
8		.54	
9			.39
10		.43	
11			.59
12			.41
13	.45		
14	.67		
15			.53
16		.56	
17	.57		
18		.53	
19			
20		.44	
21		.61	
22		.42	
% of Variance	82.6	11.5	5.9
Eigenvalues	7.75	7.08	.55

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